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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMC CARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Saudi Arabia, Palestinian
Territories, Syria/Iraq, Lebanon (7/6)

11. Summary: Syrian papers reported that President Asad received a phone call from Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz which focused on the situation in the Middle East and bilateral relations. Papers also reported that Arab and Islamic groups at the UN in Geneva approved a draft resolution proposed by delegations from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia, regarding the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories in light of the Israeli military escalation. The two groups presented the draft resolution to the Secretary of the UN Human Rights Council to make it an official document to be submitted to the Council's extraordinary meeting to study Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians. The draft resolution calls for stopping the Israeli military attack on the Gaza Strip, halting the continuing Israeli violations against Palestinians, and condemning Israeli arrests of Palestinian officials and ministers. Meanwhile, the Jeddah-based Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called on the International Quartet and the European Union to intervene immediately to stop the Israeli aggression against Palestinians. On Syrian-Iraqi relations papers reported that the seventh Syrian convoy of humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people headed to Iraq Wednesday to meet the needs of hospitals and health centers. A statement by Dr. Bashar al-Shaar, Minister of State for the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Organization, hoped "this aid will reach the Iraqi people as soon as possible and contribute to easing the suffering of the Iraqi brethren," pointing to the Syrian Red Crescent Organization's readiness to offer aid to the Iraqi people.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad talks on the phone with Saudi King Abdullah about the situation in the Middle East and bilateral relations"
(Government-owned Tishreen, 7/6)

"Three Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip. Israeli Prime Minister gives orders to expand aggression against Palestinians and to assassinate HAMAS officials. The Israeli army sets up a buffer zone in northern Gaza" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/6)

"The Seventh convoy of Syrian humanitarian aid is dispatched to

the Iraqi people" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/6)

"French daily L'Humanite criticizes France's vote against a report by the UN Human Rights Council critical of Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/6)

"Former Lebanese Prime Minister Al-Hoss calls for adopting an overall salvation initiative by a government of national unity. Former Lebanese Minister Franjieh: Lebanon's interest lies in its commitment to its Arab identity but not to America's" (Government-owned al-Thawra, 7/6)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Accusations Do Not Solve the Problem"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (7/6): "We do not know whether it was the US Administration or Israel that invented the tactic of leveling accusations against Syria and blaming it for every problem in the region. But we know that the two have always found a party to blame for their successive failures and crises."

"This American-Israeli agreement to blame Syria for tension and instability in the region has been an official policy of Washington and Tel Aviv since the first moment of the Iraq invasion, and indeed before then, when the US Administration realized that Syria was a stumbling block in the way of its

expansionist and hegemonic plans in the region, at the top of which is the Greater Middle East plan....

"Israeli War Minister Amir Peretz accused Syria of capturing Israeli soldier Gil'ad Shalit in a commando military operation in Gaza, not in the Damascus suburbs! He also held Syria responsible for Shalit's life, as if Syrian military forces and intelligence agencies were deployed in Palestinian territories."

"Peretz and his generals know that these accusations are untrue and bitterly ridiculous. But we excuse the Israeli government -- its head, ministers, and generals. All of them want to regain the lost prestige of the Israeli army, which suffered a heavy blow in the Karm Salim operation, where the Israeli soldier was captured. Israeli military and political establishments found out that the operation was a major affront to Israel's most sacred possession: the army."

"But exporting crises and trying to blame others for the logical results of Israeli policies and hostile actions will not rehabilitate an army skilled at killing and terrorism. It will not solve the problem or bring calm back to the region. As long as Israel is moving against the current of peace, it will remain vulnerable to spontaneous revenge acts from a besieged people threatened with death and with nothing to lose."

"Arrogance"

Adnan Ali, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (7/6): "It is surprising that the world is turning a deaf ear to Israel's statements that its current aggression against Palestinians seeks to bring down the HAMAS government...."

"Israel is launching a military campaign to cancel the results of democratic elections through brute force under the eyes and ears of a world that is doing nothing to defend these values...."

"Israel is imposing collective punishment against more than 4 million Palestinian detainees in the West Bank and Gaza because

of one captured soldier.... What is happening is a blatant incident of arrogance and insolence that will certainly leave a blot of disgrace on the history of modern civilization...."

"Wars of Windmills"

Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/6): "Some Lebanese have started to realize, but too late, that for the United States they are not allies, friends, or even hired people, but far less than that."

"These people are in a dilemma as they find themselves abandoned by Americans and rejected by the Lebanese people.... They realize that their road to Damascus is no longer open, indeed, that there is no longer a road for them to Damascus, at least today, and that Damascus' gates, though plenty, are closed to them and open to all other Lebanese, and they are many. This is why they try hard to hide behind these others, carry their banners, and borrow their faces...."

"Lebanon's problem today is not with anyone beyond Lebanon's border. Lebanon's problem is with those who betrayed Lebanon in the name of defending it, and bargained over Lebanon in the name of its freedom."

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